

24 August 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 24 August 1979

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The Director was on leave; Mr. Carlucci chaired the meeting. [ ]

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Clarke called attention to Harrison Salisbury's article, The Hitler-Stalin Pact in today's NYT (attached), noting it as the kind of thinking we should be paying attention to. Clarke said [ ] the Chinese are moving troops closer to Vietnam's border and that we are watching this closely; he said Charlie Neuhauser has already briefed Vice President Mondale. In response to Mr. Carlucci's query, Clarke said he is uncertain at the moment of where we stand re variations between State and Defense on the matter of MX basing; he said [ ] is handling it. Mr. Carlucci asked Clarke to look into it and have [ ] brief him (Mr. Carlucci) on it today, [ ]

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[ ] said the President's decision on the MX can be expected during the week of 5 September. Regarding SALT, [ ] said the SSCI and SFRC still don't have their act together, that the SSCI will probably be late in reporting to the SFRC, and that the Director may be asked to appear at an SSCI wrap-up session. Noting [ ] staff meeting report of 22 August re a possible request also by the SFRC for the Director to appear in open session, Mr. Carlucci said this should be resisted if at all possible.

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[ ] agreed and said he is working on it. [ ]

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[ ] said Senator Bayh will be travelling to Rome on Monday and [ ] He said also [ ] (OSR) has been sought as a witness to appear at Sen. Byrd's Armed Services Procurement subcommittee; he said witnesses from DoD are also to appear. [ ]

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Silver said columnist Jack Anderson appeared with classified documents on today's "Good Morning, America" (ABC-TV). Silver said DOJ's Bass is already preparing a recommendation to AG Civiletti for return of classified documents in Anderson's possession (criminal suit, if necessary). [ ]

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TOP SECRET

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Silver said the current situation re Charters Legislation is a "mystery;" he hasn't been able to reach SSCI's Bill Miller and he believes Miller will be accompanying Sen. Bayh on his trip to Rome. Mr. Carlucci asked about the status of procedures approval from the Attorney General for implementation of E. O. 12036: Silver said he has forwarded a paper for DCI signature which states we can't live with the Attorney General's stipulation for annual review and approval (September 1980) and AG option to rescind approval.

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Zellmer reported Les Dirks was attending a Space Panel meeting this morning at the Pentagon.

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Mr. Carlucci instructed that until the Director returns to duty, actions for the Director's attention (including signature) should be addressed to him as Acting Director of Central Intelligence.

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TOP SECRET

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 1979

# The Hitler-Stalin Pact

By Harrison E. Salisbury

On Aug. 23, 1939, the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop secretly arrived in Moscow; on Aug. 24, he and Stalin signed the Soviet-Nazi pact, and seven days later World War II began with the Wehrmacht invasion of Poland.

The Soviet-Nazi pact struck the uneasy post-Munich world like a bolt of lightning from a clear summer sky. I was vacationing on the hot, desolate beach of Nags Head, N.C., and I was incredulous as I heard the news crackling out from a portable radio. No one believed it. War, yes. We had lived on its brink for months. But a deal between those deadly enemies, Hitler and Stalin? Inconceivable!

It is that inconceivability that is worth pondering today. It is the "inconceivable" that again and again puts the world into peril. The imaginative capability of diplomats is traditionally limited. Generals always prepare to fight the last war again, and statesmen occupy themselves repeating Versailles or Vienna or Potsdam.

But it is the inconceivable that happens.

Against the judgment of every expert, Hitler and Stalin did get together and the pact of Aug. 24, 1939 triggered World War II. What lesson did the diplomats learn from that? A simple one. They now believed (Stalin among them) that the pact would endure far into the future, that Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia would stay in partnership and divide the world.

Again, they were wrong. To many, the Nazi attack on Russia on June 22, 1941, was as big a surprise as the August 1939 agreement.

What World War II proved was that not one piece of conventional wisdom was viable.

What were the clichés of 1939? That France possessed "the best land army in Europe."

That the Maginot Line was "impregnable."

## After 40 years, the non-lessons of the 'inconceivable'

That the Royal Air Force hadn't a chance to beat off Herman Göring's Luftwaffe.

That Germany would never fight a two-front war.

That the Red Army would not last a month against Nazi blitzkrieg.

That once was enough — the United States had entered World War I and

would never participate in World War II.

That Japan would never attack the United States.

That Pearl Harbor was invulnerable.

Every basic presumption of the diplomats and the generals proved wrong.

What have we learned in the 40 years since Aug. 24, 1939? Not much. We went into the cold war convinced that Communism was indivisible, that Marxism was a Gibraltar with its headquarters in the Kremlin. Stalin ran it all.

When Marshal Tito first broke with Stalin, most diplomats and many Americans called it a Communist trick. How could there be divisions within the Marxist monolith? When the Soviet Union and Communist China parted ways in the late 1950's, John Foster Dulles refused to believe it. When I reported on Soviet-Chinese conflict in Outer Mongolia in 1959, this evidence of a basic split between the Communist giants was pooh-poohed; it continued to be until the Nixon-Kissinger "opening" to China in 1971-72. Today, conflict and war in the "indivisible" Communist world is common.

The canny statesman today would look around the world for the "inconceivables": rapprochement between Moscow and Peking; military and nuclear armament of India and Japan; a Sino-Japanese alliance; a Soviet-Indian alliance; an Iranian-Iraqi alliance; an Israeli nuclear attack on the Arabs; a new Egyptian-Soviet deal; a resurgence of German militarism.

All of these developments lie in that vast imaginative region that Herman Kahn calls "thinking the unthinkable." Each is unthinkable. Probably none will happen. But a prudent statesman, a man who understands the lessons of Aug. 24, 1939, will not write them all off.

Foreign policy, the balance of world powers, the interrelationship of states is not something set in concrete. It is in constant motion like the tides of a turbulent sea.

Forty years after the most devastating international event of the century, there is no evidence that its lessons have been absorbed, analyzed or, indeed, even remembered by the men who make American policy or those upon whom that policy rests for its support, the American people.

Harrison E. Salisbury, retired Associate Editor of The New York Times, was The Times's correspondent in Moscow for many years. He is author of "Black Night, White Snow," a revisionist examination of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.